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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON
THE WORK OF THE ORGANIZATION

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-first year

Letter dated 31 July 1996 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In his statement of 22 February 1995 (S/PRST/1995/9), the President of the Security Council invited all interested Member States to present further reflections on United Nations peace-keeping operations, and in particular on ways and means to improve the capacity of the United Nations for rapid deployment.

I attach the United Kingdom's response to that invitation (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 10 of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) John WESTON

* A/51/150.

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ANNEX

Reply of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Supplement to an Agenda for Peace

Introduction

1. We believe the United Nations will continue to play a key role in international peace-keeping. If the United Nations is to play the demanding role expected of it then it needs to be equipped by its members with the capability to carry out complex missions. United Nations members must give the United Nations their confidence, commitment and contributions, if effective United Nations peace-keeping is to remain a valid tool for the international community in responding to threats to international peace and security. We recognize the major changes made to the Department of Peace-keeping Operations since 1993, which have enhanced United Nations peace-keeping capability significantly. There is a continuing need for the Department of Peace-keeping Operations to evaluate its performance critically if it is to retain the necessary dynamism and credibility.

2. The Secretary-General has identified intra-State conflicts as most likely to pose a threat to international peace and security. United Nations members will wish to see the United Nations play its role in addressing the problems posed by such conflicts. Broadly speaking, there may be three different types:

(a) A primarily military mission involving cease-fire monitoring and disengagement;

(b) The implementation of a negotiated peace settlement requiring a multidimensional operation;

(c) An operation where peace may be precarious, the normal criteria are not fully met, but international public opinion demands an intervention to stop bloodshed, support humanitarian operations or consolidate or even impose a peace.

3. The experience and advantage of the United Nations in cease-fire monitoring and in supervising the implementation of a multifaceted peace settlement is well established. It has an unparalleled depth of experience. The broad scope of its international legitimacy under the Charter of the United Nations backed by its membership and the broad scope of its activities including those required for peacebuilding are very clear. It is less well suited to enforcement operations, where ad hoc coalitions, particularly in the initial stages, and regional organizations and arrangements may have a role. It is extremely important that in looking to the future and in considering responses to different types of operations, the international community seeks to develop comparative advantages and not to create duplicating capabilities.

4. The Department of Peace-keeping Operations will need to remain a source of expert military advice and assessment, supported as necessary by expertise from troop-contributing nations. It must take constant account of international

trends, and be ready to draw on lessons learned by the Organization and by Member States through operational experience. We welcome the work of the Lessons Learnt Unit and see this note as a contribution to follow-up work in this context. The United Kingdom has been one of the largest troop contributors to United Nations operations over the last five years.

Mandates

5. The United Kingdom believes that an essential precondition for peace-keeping operations must be a clear understanding at the political and diplomatic level of the practical implications of mandates involving use of the military and the projection and use of force. There must be common awareness of peace-keeping doctrine and a unity of understanding at United Nations Headquarters among Member States on the Security Council, among troop-contributing nations, in the United Nations Secretariat and by the public.

6. The Security Council must recognize the limits of what can realistically be achieved by the peace-keeping forces available in a given situation. It should not pass resolutions that are declaratory and cannot be implemented on the ground. The criteria established by the Security Council on 4 May 1994 provide a useful framework for decisions on new peace-keeping missions. To ensure that the Security Council is fully aware of military practicalities we would welcome more regular briefings of the Council in informal consultations by the Military Adviser to the Secretary-General and by force commanders where appropriate. The Military Adviser should be able to draw on military expertise from leading troop-contributing nations where necessary. In parallel, United Nations military and civilian officials should continue to brief the Council and potential troop-contributing nations on the military aspects and implications of Council decisions before the adoption of new mandates and when major change is in prospect. Effective arrangements for consulting troop-contributing nations on the mandates of peace-keeping operations is vital and we welcome recent improvements. Council members, troop-contributing nations and the Secretariat must work together to make these a success. Changes in mandate during the mission need thorough reassessment, taking account of military advice as to the implications on the ground for both military and civil components and need full discussion with troop-contributing nations as well as the Council.

Doctrine

7. A common approach to doctrine among the United Nations and troop-contributing nations is essential for successful peace-keeping operations. The doctrinal approach must be agreed and understood at the political/diplomatic level as well as by military participants on the ground. In particular, it is essential that the distinction is recognized between peace-keeping and peace enforcement. The key difference does not lie in whether they are mandated under Chapter VII or Chapter VI of the Charter, but in aim and approach. The type of operation has fundamental implications for the structure and equipment of the force, and the manner in which it is deployed.

Peace-keeping operations

8. Peace-keeping operations are based on the core principles of consent and impartiality. The most successful peace-keeping operations of the United Nations have been deployments in support of a previously agreed peace settlement (Mozambique, Namibia, El Salvador, Cambodia and now Angola). Actions are impartial and forces use techniques that promote and sustain consent. In principle, force may be used only in self-defence. In practice this need not preclude the robust use of force, provided it is proportionate and allows for the maintenance/rebuilding of consent and the implications for all civil and military entities on the ground are taken into account.

Non-consensual peace support operations

9. Peace restoration/peace enforcement require an approach and techniques that are distinct from peace-keeping. Such operations may involve the coercive use of force in favour of the desired outcome. At the lower end of the scale, peace restoration could involve the use of force to put an end to fighting or disorder or in order to create specified conditions, such as a secure environment for the operation of humanitarian agencies or the restoration of law and order. Forces deployed on peace enforcement missions need to be equipped, commanded and controlled in a manner that provides them with the capability to use warfighting techniques and to impose their will.

10. The United Nations is not suited to complex joint operations potentially involving the coercive use of force. We would not normally expect United Nations blue-helmeted forces to be used in non-consensual operations. The role of the United Nations as a world organization with unique legitimacy under the Charter can be prejudiced by sudden shifts of approach or operations that are demonstrably partial. The United Nations may exceptionally, however, deploy forces on a peace restoration mission under United Nations command if the mission is small scale with a clear aim, if there is a credible lead nation and if the mission is largely or entirely a land operation. The United Nations is not suited to acting in partnership with other or regional organizations in an enforcement mode: we believe United Nations forces should be under United Nations command and not subject to pressures from other organizations.

Training

11. Training is essential for successful peace-keeping operations. Great progress has been made in international training for peace-keeping operations, with particularly useful contributions from Scandinavian countries. We believe that it is important to draw on the experience in this field of a wide range of Member States. Training should remain a national responsibility, but the United Nations can play a useful supporting role, establishing guidelines, preparing common modules such as those usefully developed by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and providing expertise, both on call and resident. The United Nations should keep and publish a register of peace-keeping training facilities provided by Member States, noting areas of specialization and disseminate this on the Internet. It should also provide regularly updated training guidelines for national training by Member States.

The United Nations should be associated with peace-keeping training programmes conducted by troop-contributing nations in third countries (e.g., through the Anglo-French peace-keeping initiative).

12. The United Kingdom is making an increasing contribution to peace-keeping training. Our policy has been to concentrate on staff training for peace-keeping operations, an area in which our armed forces have particular expertise. We favour the creation of peace-keeping training modules at staff colleges, based on a common doctrinal approach, and have adopted this concept at the British Army Staff College. Under our African Peace-keeping Initiative we have helped support the staff colleges of other countries as regional centres for staff training. We have helped with the intellectual development of peace-keeping theory through a series of exercises held in the United Kingdom and in Africa, based on complex scenarios. We now wish to see the further development of staff training in complex multinational staffwork. The creation of the Anglo-French Joint Commission on Peace-keeping announced by the British Prime Minister and President Chirac in May 1996 is a step in this direction. The next step could then be field exercises to test under realistic conditions all entities involved in complex peace-keeping operations.

13. Among our main objectives has been the promotion of common understanding among all contributors to United Nations operations, including the military, police, civilians, non-governmental organizations and the humanitarian community, United Nations agencies and other players, such as the media. It is equally important to break down barriers of different disciplines and cultures, such as those of multinationality. Overcoming linguistic barriers is an important aspect of this process. We helped with the production by the Accra Staff College of an Anglo-French peace-keeping glossary. The development of language training will be considered as part of the work of the Anglo-French Joint Commission on Peace-keeping.

14. We believe the United Nations should ensure that its own staff are properly trained for peace-keeping operations. The United Nations should allow time for staff to participate in international exercises, both to learn and to offer their expertise. The United Nations own training resources should be focused on upgrading information technology and basic management skills at all levels. The United Nations could also provide selected staff with more advanced training in modern management techniques, particularly as regards financial controls and administration. Training modules/videos in United Nations logistics and administrative procedures could be prepared for use in Member State courses. United Nations personnel who had graduated from United Nations-authorized courses could become a reserve administrative cadre to provide high calibre administrative officers and staff to fill vacancies at short notice in field missions.

15. Unity of purpose and common understanding within a mission can benefit enormously from pre-deployment and in-theatre training. Training of United Nations Headquarters staff before the deployment of peace-keeping operation is therefore essential. Pre-mission training for the staff of the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) was a useful example. Troop-contributing nations may be able to support this by offering facilities, orientation courses and Headquarters staff exercises for specific missions. This training should

include familiarization with mission information technology and software and, where necessary, media handling techniques, and working with non-governmental organizations and the humanitarian community.

Planning

16. The first requirement in mission planning is for broad strategic guidance and an assessment of forces likely to be available to the United Nations. The Standby Forces Planning Initiative is a valuable strategic planning tool in indicating to the United Nations what forces may be available in theory (though there is still scope for encouraging wider participation, particularly among African nations). The United Nations now needs to know under what circumstances these nations might be prepared to make their troops available, and on what timescale. Standby force planners should therefore include United Nations representatives (perhaps former special representatives of the Secretary-General) able to conduct a political dialogue, and not just a technical dialogue, with Governments of potential troop-contributing nations to promote understanding of a new mission. A force balancing conference may also be a useful tool to generate the necessary forces in a given situation.

17. Since very few nations have the capacity to deploy rapidly, the United Nations needs particular understanding of the circumstances under which more rapidly deployable forces could move immediately to implement a Security Council resolution. This may require a lead nation to set up the core of the operation (or elements of it, e.g. logistics) in tandem with the core elements of a United Nations staff headquarters. The United Nations will need to bear in mind that those nations that have prepared their forces rapidly in the early stages of an operation are likely to desire the early withdrawal of these forces once the main body is in place.

18. An operational directive to the force commander and the special representative of the Secretary-General is needed to translate the Secretary-General's report and the resulting Security Council resolution into practice. We expect the planning team from the Mission Planning Service of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and key troop contributors to provide the core cadre for the rapidly deployable headquarters of a new mission, though in managing this process it will be important to ensure sufficient expertise is retained in New York. Early reconnaissance of a prospective mission area is essential. As outlined above, it will be important to draw in representatives of the lead nation and potential troop contributors, as well as the force commander if possible, to join the planning of a new mission from an early stage. Where an operation has a major humanitarian component, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) should also be fully included at this stage. All elements, including engineering, civil affairs, public information, logistics, administrative, police and humanitarian, should participate in reconnaissance missions.

19. Initial assessment should draw on all available sources, including academic experts, in-theatre non-governmental organizations and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). States that are in a position to contribute

military information and situation analysis on a given theatre of operations that affect recommendations by the Secretary-General to the Security Council should provide it. Once a mission is at the planning stage, links should be established with regional arrangements or States in a position to help, whether with regular analysis, assessments, intelligence reports or personnel.

20. Following the initial assessment the Mission Planning Service should draw up the outline operational directive, which includes the concept of operations, ensuring that it reflects realities in theatre, the availability of forces and the operational objectives. This will provide the framework for early consideration of important issues such as rules of engagement, logistics and engineering plans. The provision of military maps from either United Nations sources or by Member States with the necessary capability is essential. Another key objective of the early part of the planning process should be to draw up a core public information message derived from the mandate. A United Nations radio station should be part of all but the smallest missions.

Command and control

21. The United Kingdom reply to an Agenda for Peace set out ideas for developing an effective command, control and planning capability for peace-keeping, principally through an expanded planning and operations staff. Good progress has since been made in expending the capacity of United Nations Headquarters to plan and mount peace-keeping operations, in particular with the establishment of the Mission Planning Service and its Standby Elements Planning Team. We are pleased that a significant contribution to the implementation of these improvements has been made by British officers on secondment to the United Nations.

22. We welcome the ideas now being put forward by the Canadian Government and the United Nations for a rapidly deployable headquarters, which offers the scope to develop this capability further. Such a rapidly deployable core headquarters might best be composed of a mixture of seconded and permanent personnel. It should include all the elements for a peace-keeping operation, including military, civilian and humanitarian, whose work could be coordinated by a single mission chief of staff. It must also include the chief administrative and logistics officers to ensure that they are fully integrated from the start. Leading troop-contributing nations should also participate from an early stage. The United Nations Headquarters structure would need to be adequately staffed and sufficiently flexible to allow backfilling when the first elements deploy and for a degree of surge capability.

The mission plan

23. United Nations Headquarters (the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs) should outline the aims of the mission derived from Security Council resolutions and the report of the Secretary-General in a directive to the head of mission. This should be developed into an operational mission plan by the core elements, civil and military, of the headquarters in theatre, who would then be responsible for its implementation.

The mission plan should be continually reviewed against the mission objectives and the changing situation on the ground. It must factor in all mission components: civil affairs, military, police, humanitarian, public information, etc. Gaming a relevant scenario would help all key players to understand their respective roles and present a common view of their respective purposes. The United Nations could prepare a model mission plan for guidance, and ask States for help in providing scenarios or facilities.

Operational level command arrangements

24. The principles of integration and unity of command are desirable but rarely achievable given the many different players in any theatre of operations. This must be reflected in command arrangements in theatre as well as at the planning stage. Artificial divides between civil and military components are very unhelpful to achieving mission objectives and have no place in multi-component operations. A mission chief of staff attuned to both cultures could play a valuable role in integrating the work of all components. Standardized communications operating procedures are needed for all United Nations missions, and could be incorporated into the pre-deployment training undertaken by troop-contributing nations.

25. A civil-military operations centre should be the main operational focal point at theatre level in any multifaceted operation. All components, including military, civilian and humanitarian, should work side by side in an integrated operations structure staffed from all departments.

Rapid response capability

26. Even with the best logistic and planning capability there is likely to be a gap between the signing of a peace agreement and the arrival of the first elements of the peace-keeping force. This could be filled by rapidly deployable United Nations military observers who, as individuals, could deploy more quickly than formed units and could act as eyes and ears of the core headquarters and first rapid units to deploy (if available). Before the arrival of the main force the United Nations military observers could help monitor a cease-fire, develop liaison between the parties and provide a clear sign of the commitment of the international community to the settlement. We suggest the United Nations should consider establishing a standby capability of United Nations military observers able to deploy quickly. Governments could undertake to keep lists of suitable serving officers for selection by the United Nations. The British Government would aim to respond quickly to a United Nations request in these circumstances. If the United Nations military observers are to fulfil their role effectively, they need to be fully trained and prepared. The United Nations and/or selected troop-contributing nations should run an orientation course for the first teams of United Nations military observers. Effective command of the principal mission language (usually English), and an ability to drive to the necessary standard are essential prerequisites for the selection of personnel. The appropriate level of logistic and vehicle support would be needed and should be borne in mind in considering the future of the United Nations Logistics Base. Interpreters would also be essential. The same

principles could apply to United Nations police observers, but the criteria for selection would need to be particularly rigorous.

Public information and community relations

27. Public affairs and community relations must be an integral part of all peace-keeping missions. The public information campaign has two key audiences. One is public opinion in States Members of the United Nations, especially those contributing troops to the operation, but also including those close to the mission area or with a particular interest in it such as shared ethnic or cultural roots. The objective is to create an international understanding and consensus over the objectives of the mission. This audience is reached through the international media, which requires sophisticated and professional handling from the start of the mission, and is best served by a consistent and open information policy that recognizes the pressures imposed by the real time reporting of the electronic media. The information effort must include military and civilian components (as in the last year of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). A good example is provided by the joint press conferences held by the Implementation Force (IFOR), the United Nations, UNHCR and OHR in Sarajevo. The line taken and reports of press conferences should be repeated instantly to all contingents and subordinate headquarters, as well as to other relevant players. A particular effort should be made to ensure that sector commanders receive timely, up to date and flexible public information guidelines.

28. The other audience is that in the country receiving the United Nations mission and its neighbours in the subregion. The objective is to create a climate of consent for the operation at the local level. The population may have been subject to propaganda by former warring factions and is likely to have urgent need of objective information. The core United Nations message, explaining the peace settlement and the role of the United Nations, should be propagated in advance of the arrival of first elements of the force. How best to do this depends on local circumstances: there may be a role for local media as well as United Nations material such as handouts and videos. A United Nations radio station should be included in any peace-keeping mission involving formed units and should be made operational as soon as possible.

29. It is essential that the messages being given to both audiences are clear and consistent. The public information strategy should be produced at theatre level and developed day by day during the mission in the light of its evolving aims and directives. The core political message will be derived from the mandate.

30. The information strategy may be reinforced in theatre by a hearts and minds campaign undertaking clearly identifiable projects of clear value to host communities. Even on a small scale such tangible work helps to ensure local support and understanding of the mission. Flexibility and imagination are needed to achieve maximum effect, making use where possible of "other people's money", drawn from non-governmental organizations, donor Governments and others. This may best be achieved by activities by donor nations in conjunction with units deployed in specific areas. Funds could also be allocated at the

discretion of the special representative of the Secretary-General to help him achieve the political goals of the mission. He may also be a valuable source of advice on the post conflict stabilization and transition period before a fully fledged reconstruction effort begins.

Finance

31. Troop-contributing countries and the United Nations have a common interest in the financial mechanisms of peace-keeping operations working as efficiently as possible. To this end we wish to see early completion of the review of financial rules and regulations set in hand in 1995 to make them compatible with the operational needs of the complex and large-scale missions of the 1990s. To ensure sufficient expertise is available on their side, troop contributors should be encouraged to appoint civilian secretary equivalents to work in theatre with chief administrative officers and chief logistics officers. This will be particularly important if full advantage is to be taken of the new streamlined procedures for leasing and reimbursement for contributions of troops and equipment. It will also be important to improve knowledge of United Nations systems through workshops and seminars.

32. In more general terms we wish to see increased delegation of financial authority to and within missions, in the interest of both mission efficiency and responsiveness to the needs of troop contributors and of the force commander. Appointment of a deputy special representative of the Secretary-General, experienced in United Nations methods, as the officer responsible for bringing together all facets of the mission from administration to policy could be sensible for all multifaceted missions. Delegation of authority from United Nations Headquarters to missions in the field should be matched by delegation where possible from mission headquarters to the subunits at brigade or contingent level. This delegated authority needs to be matched by enhanced monitoring arrangements and regular visits by audit and inspection teams from United Nations Headquarters. We wish to see these teams conduct a systematic and rigorous examination of all aspects of administration of each mission, taking into account their constraints and objectives. Visits by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and members of the Fifth Committee may help promote understanding.

Logistics

33. We welcome the progress made by the United Nations in improving logistic support for peace-keeping missions. Much has been achieved, particularly the development of new procedures covering reimbursement for contingent-owned equipment and with the identification of ways of improving procurement procedures.

34. None the less, this remains the weakest area of United Nations performance. Serious shortcomings are visible in the performance of the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi and in the whole way the United Nations safeguards and monitors valuable equipment procured at the expense of the Member States. There are no standards for transfers of equipment between missions under the

current system. Unless a systematic effort is made to apply proper standards to Brindisi to evaluate the equipment and store it accordingly, the value is questionable. Chief administrative officers should continue to have responsibility for expenditure. But their mission budgets must be drawn up in consultation with civil and military elements and must support the mission aims while taking account of financial constraints. Chief administrative officer recommendations must go forward accompanied by certification from force commanders and mission heads that the proposals have been fully discussed down to contingent level and endorsed. The reserve cadre of administrative officers proposed above could ensure a uniform approach to balance operational efficiency. The United Nations also needs to consider how best to procure strategic lift. There are operational advantages in allowing nations with their own lift to use this where possible. It could facilitate deployment if the United Nations was to consider providing a letter of assist, up to an agreed figure, to enable nations to undertake the deployment of their own personnel to a timetable agreed with the United Nations.

Contracts

35. If no nation is prepared to provide core logistics for an operation, and a commercial contractor is used, the United Nations must utilize the flexibility already inherent in the financial rules and regulations to begin the tendering procedure in sufficient time for the contractor to be able to provide a service in sufficient time to support the mission. It should identify these contractors by open international competition and ensure they meet the required performance criteria in advance, perhaps by using dormant contracts relating to specific regions. Contract administration and monitoring should be strengthened to ensure performance standards are met and value for money secured. Contractors who fail to meet necessary standards should be barred from future bids.

Lessons learned

36. We attach particular importance to the development of the institutional memory of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and its ability to draw on the practical lessons of peace-keeping missions. Many key lessons, especially on logistic and transport aspects of deployment, are likely to arise in the early part of a mission. We therefore believe specific responsibility for retaining and analysing lessons learned should be allocated from the outset of a mission to a specific officer or officers (civil and military). The United Nations should also consider the appointment of a (military) historian to work on the lessons of the operation and ensure that proper archives are kept.

Conclusion

37. The environment and demands of United Nations peace-keeping have changed dramatically during the 1990s, and the United Nations has initiated important changes in response. The proposals outlined in this paper suggest further areas in which change could be valuable as part of a dynamic process. We hope they will be received as a constructive contribution. They do not have resource implications if Member States support the United Nations and a new management culture is adopted. Collectively we believe their implementation could significantly enhance the ability of the United Nations to contribute to international security in a fast-changing world.

United Nations Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

22 July 1996